

## CHAPTER XV

### CONSTANTINE'S DEATH AND CHARACTER

IT seems incontestable that Constantine degenerated as he grew older. Certainly his popularity tended to decrease. This, however, is the usual penalty of length of reign, and in itself would not count for much. But one cannot overlook the cumulative evidence which is to be found in the authorities of the period. Eusebius himself admits \* that unscrupulous men often took advantage of the piety and generosity of the Emperor, and many of the stories which he tells in Constantine's praise prepare us for the charges which were brought against him by the pagan historians. For example, Eusebius declares that whenever the Emperor heard a civil appeal, he used to make up out of his private purse the amount in which the losing party was mulcted, on the extraordinary principle that both the winner and the loser ought to leave their sovereign's presence equally satisfied. Such a theory would speedily beggar the richest treasury. Aurelius Victor preserves a popular saying which shews the general estimation in which Constantine's memory *Vita Const.*, iv., 54.